deed reduced by well-nigh one-half its effective force, but all that was left, was good. Besides, the Confederates, too, had suffered severely. Their loss in killed and wounded and prisoners was very serious. Several of their brigades had become disordered during the action to such an extent that it required some time to re-form them. It is therefore at least doubtful whether they could have easily captured Cemetery Hill before the arrival of heavy reinforcements on our side. Another disputed point is whether we did not make a great mistake in continuing the bloody fight north of the town too long.

Thirty-eight years after the event I was called upon by Mr. John Codman Ropes, the eminent historian of the Civil War, who unfortunately for the country has died before finishing his work. He had then the history of the battle of Gettysburg in hand and wished to have my recollections as to certain details. In the course of our conversation I asked him what his criticism was of our conduct on the first day. He said that on the whole we fought well and were obliged to yield the field north and east of the town, but that we committed a great mistake in not retreating to our second position south and west of Gettysburg an hour and perhaps two hours earlier. The same opinion was expressed by General Doubleday in his official report. In referring to about that time of the day he says: “ Upon taking a retrospect of the field it might seem, in view

of the fact that we were finally forced to retreat, that this would have been the proper time to retire; but to fall back without orders from the commanding general might have inflicted lasting disgrace upon the corps—nor would I have retreated without the knowledge and approbation of General Howard, who was my superior officer. Had I done so, it would have uncovered the left flank of, his corps. If circumstances required it, it was his place, not mine, to issue the order. Gen-